THE DREAMERS
AND
OTHER POEMS

THEODOSIA GARRISON

Lana D. McComb
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AND OTHER POEMS

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BY

THEODOSIA GARRISON

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TO

F. J. F.

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THE DREAMERS
AND OTHER POEMS

THE DREAMERS AND OTHER POEMS

THE DREAMERS

The gypsies passed her little gate—
She stopped her wheel to see,—
A brown-faced pair who walked the road,
Free as the wind is free;
And suddenly her tidy room
A prison seemed to be.

Her shining plates against the walls,
Her sunlit, sanded floor,
The brass-bound wedding chest that held
Her linen's snowy store,

The very wheel whose humming died,—
Seemed only chains she bore.

She watched the foot-free gypsies pass;
She never knew or guessed
The wistful dream that drew them close—
The longing in each breast
Some day to know a home like hers,
Wherein their hearts might rest.

THREE SONGS IN A GARDEN

I

White rose-leaves in my hands,
I toss you all away;
The winds shall blow you through the world
To seek my wedding day.
Or East you go, or West you go
And fall on land or sea,
Find the one that I love best
And bring him here to me.
And if he finds me spinning
'Tis short I'll break my thread;
And if he finds me dancing
I'll dance with him instead;

If he finds me at the Mass—
(Ah, let this not be,
Lest I forget my sweetest saint
The while he kneels by me!)

II

My lilies are like nuns in white
That guard me well all day,
But the red, red rose that near them grows
Is wiser far than they.
Oh, red rose, wise rose,
Keep my secret well;
I kiss you twice, I kiss you thrice
To pray you not to tell.
My lilies sleep beneath the moon,
But wide awake are you,
And you have heard a certain word
And seen a dream come true.

Oh, red rose, wise rose,
  Silence for my sake,
Nor drop to-night a petal light
  Lest my white lilies wake.

III

Will the garden never forget
  That it whispers over and over,
"Where is your lover, Nanette?
  Where is your lover—your lover?"
Oh, roses I helped to grow,
  Oh, lily and mignonette,
Must you always question me so,
  "Where is your lover, Nanette?"
Since you looked on my joy one day,
  Is my grief then a lesser thing?
Have you only this to say
  When I pray you for comforting?

Now that I walk alone
  Here where our hands were met,
Must you whisper me every one,
  "Where is your lover, Nanette?"

I have mourned with you year and year,
  When the Autumn has left you bare,
And now that my heart is sere
  Does not one of your roses care?
Oh, help me forget—forget,
  Nor question over and over,
"Where is your lover, Nanette?
  Where is your lover—your lover?"

THE RETURN

I lost Young Love so long ago
I had forgot him quite,
Until a little lass and lad
Went by my door to-night.

Ah, hand in hand, but not alone,
They passed my open door,
For with them walked that other one
Who paused here Mays before.

And I, who had forgotten long,
Knew suddenly the grace
Of one who in an empty land
Beholds a kinsman's face.

Oh, Young Love, gone these many years,
'Twas you came back to-night,
And laid your hand on my two eyes
That they might see aright,

And took my listless hand in yours
(Your hands without a stain),
And touched me on my tired heart
That it might beat again.

BLACK SHEEP

"Black Sheep, Black Sheep,
Have you any wool?"
"That I have, my Master,
Three bags full."

One is for the mother who prays for me at night—
A gift of broken promises to count by candle-light.

One is for the tried friend who raised me when I fell—
A gift of weakling's tinsel oaths that strew the path to hell.

And one is for the true love—the heaviest of all—
That holds the pieces of a faith a careless hand
let fall.

Black Sheep, Black Sheep,
Have you ought to say?
A word to each, my Master,
Ere I go my way.

A word unto my mother to bid her think o' me
Only as a little lad playing at her knee.

A word unto my tried friend to bid him see again
Two laughing lads in Springtime a-racing down
the glen.

A word unto my true love—a single word—to
pray
If one day I cross her path to turn her eyes away.

MONSEIGNEUR PLAYS

Monseigneur plays his new gavotte—
Within her gilded chair the Queen
Listens, her rustling maids between;
A very tulip-garden stirred
To hear the fluting of a bird;
Faint sunlight through the casement falls
On cupids painted on the walls
At play with doves. Precisely set
Awaits the slender legged spinet
Expectant of its happy lot,
The while the player stays to twist
The cobweb ruffle from his wrist.
A pause, and then— (Ah, whisper not)
Monseigneur plays his new gavotte.

Monseigneur plays his new gavotte—
Hark, 'tis the faintest dawn of Spring,
So still the dew drops whispering
Is loud upon the violets;
Here in this garden of Pierrettes'
Where Pierrot waits, ah, hasten Sweet,
And hear; on dainty, tripping feet
She comes—the little, glad coquette.
"Ah thou, Pierrot?" "Ah thou, Pierrette?"
A kiss, nay, hear—a bird wakes, then
A silence—and they kiss again,
"Ah, Mesdames, have you quite forgot—"
(So laughs his music.) "Love's first kiss?
Let this note lead you then, and this
Back to that fragrant garden-spot."
Monseigneur plays his new gavotte.

Monseigneur plays his new gavotte—
Ah, hear—in that last note they go

The little lovers laughing so;
Kissing their finger-tips, they dance
From out this gilded room of France.
Adieu! Monseigneur rises now
Ready for compliment and bow,
Playing about his mouth the while
Its cynical, accustomed smile,
Protests and, hand on heart, avers
The patience of his listeners.
"A masterpiece? Ah, surely not."
A grey-eyed maid of honour slips
A long stemmed rose across her lips
And drops it; does he guess her thought?
Monseigneur plays his new gavotte.

UNBELIEF

Your chosen grasp the torch of faith—the key
Of very certainty is theirs to hold.
They read Your word in messages of gold.
Lord, what of us who have no light to see
And in the darkness doubt, whose hands may be
Broken upon the door, who find but cold
Ashes of words where others see enscrolled,
The glorious promise of Life's victory.

Oh, well for those to whom You gave the light
(The light we may not see by) whose award
Is that sure key—that message luminous,
Yet we, your people stumbling in the night,
Doubting and dumb and disbelieving—Lord,
Is there no word for us—no word for us?

THE SILENT ONE

The moon to-night is like the sun
Through blossomed branches seen;
Come out with me, dear silent one,
And trip it on the green.

"Nay, Lad, go you within its light,
Nor stay to urge me so—
'Twas on another moonlit night
My heart broke long ago."

Oh loud and high the pipers play
To speed the dancers on;
Come out and be as glad as they,
Oh, little Silent one.

"Nay, Lad, where all your mates are met
Go you the selfsame way,
Another dance I would forget
Wherein I too was gay."

But here you sit long day by day
With those whose joys are done;
What mates these townfolk old and grey
For you dear Silent one.

"Nay, Lad, they're done with joys and fears.
Rare comrades should we prove,
For they are very old with years
And I am old with love."

THE ROSE

I took the love you gave, Ah, carelessly,
Counting it only as a rose to wear
A little moment on my heart no more,
So many roses had I worn before,
So lightly that I scarce believed them there.

But, Lo! this rose between the dusk and dawn
Hath turned to very flame upon my breast,
A flame that burns the day-long and the night,
A flame of very anguish and delight
That not for any moment yields me rest.

And I am troubled with a strange, new fear,
How would it be if even to your door

I came to cry your pitying one day,
And you should lightly laugh and lightly say,
"That was a rose I gave you—nothing more."

THE SONG OF THE YOUNG PAGE

All that I know of love I see
In eyes that never look at me;
All that I know of love I guess
But from another's happiness.

A beggar at the window I,
Who, famished, looks on revelry;
A slave who lifts his torch to guide
The happy bridegroom to his bride.

My granddam told me once of one
Whom all her village spat upon,
Seeing the church from out its breast
Had cast him cursed and unconfessed.

An outcast he who dared not take
The wafer that God's vicars break,
But dull-eyed watched his neighbours pass
With shining faces from the Mass.

Oh thou, my brother, take my hand,
More than one God hath blessed and banned
And hidden from man's anguished glance
The glory of his countenance.

All that I know of love I see
In eyes that never look at me;
All that I know of love I guess
But from another's happiness.

THE NEW SPRING

The long grief left her old—and then
Came love and made her young again
As though some newer, gentler Spring
Should start dead roses blossoming;
Old roses that have lain full long
In some forgotten book of song,
Brought from their darkness to be one
With lilting winds and rain and sun;
And as they too might bring away
From that dim volume where they lay
Some lyric hint, some song's perfume
To add its beauty to their bloom,
So love awakes her heart that lies

Shrouded in fragrant memories,
And bids it bloom again and wake
Sweeter for that old sorrow's sake.

THE BURDEN

The burden that I bear would be no less
Should I cry out against it; though I fill
The weary day with sound of my distress,
It were my burden still.

The burden that I bear may be no more
For all I bear it silently and stay
Sometimes to laugh and listen at a door
Where joy keeps holiday.

I ask no more save only this may be—
On life's long road, where many comrades fare,
One shall not guess, though he keep step with me,
The burden that I bear.

THE BRIDE

I

Though other eyes were turned to him,
He turned to look in mine;
Though others filled the cup abrim,
He might not taste the wine.

I am so glad my eyes were first
In which his own might sink;
I am so glad he went athirst
Until I bade him drink.

II

The Well-Belovèd took my hand
And led me to his fair abode,

The home that Love and he had planned.
(Strange that so well I knew the road.)

And through the open door we went,
And at our feet the hearth-light fell,
And I—I laughed in all content,
Seeing I knew the place so well.

Ah, to no stranger Love displayed
Its every nook, its every grace,
This was the House of Dreams I made
Long, long before I saw his face.

III

I jested over-much in days of old,
I looked on sorrow once and did not care,
Now Love hath crowned my head with very gold,
I will be worthy of the joy I wear.

There is not one a-hungered or a-cold
Shall seek my door but that he too shall share
Something of this vast happiness I hold;
I will be worthy of the joy I wear.

For I was hungered and Love spread the feast,
Cold—and He touched my heart and warmed it there,
Yea, crowned me Queen—I neediest of His least,
I will be worthy of the joy I wear.

THE SEER OF HEARTS

For mocking on men's faces
He only sees instead
The hidden, hundred traces
Of tears their eyes have shed.

Above their lips denying,
Through all their boasting dares,
He hears the anguished crying
Of old unanswered prayers.

And through the will's reliance
He only sees aright
A frightened child's defiance
Left lonely in the night.

THE UNSEEN MIRACLE

The Angel of the night when night was gone
High upon Heaven's ramparts, cried, "The Dawn!"

And wheeling worlds grew radiant with the one
And undiminished glory of the sun.

And Angel, Seraph, Saint and Cherubim
Raised to the morning their exultant hymn.

All Heaven thrilled anew to look upon
The great recurring miracle of dawn.

And in the little worlds beneath them—men
Rose, yawned and ate and turned to toil again.

THE APRIL BOUGHS

It was not then her heart broke—
That moment when she knew
That all her faith held holiest
Was utterly untrue.

It was not then her heart broke—
That night of prayer and tears
When first she dared the thought of life
Through all the empty years.

But when beneath the April boughs
She felt the blossoms stir,
The careless mirth of yesterday
Came near and smiled at her.

Old singing lingered in the wind,
Old joy came close again,
Oh, underneath the April boughs,
I think her heart broke then.

TRANSIENTS

They are ashamed who leave so soon
The Inn of Grief—who thought to stay
Through many a faithful sun and moon,
  Yet tarry but a day.

Shame-faced I watch them pay the score,
Then straight with eager footsteps press
Where waits beyond its rose-wreathed door
  The Inn of Happiness.

I wish I did not know that here,
Here too—where they have dreamed to stay
So many and many a golden year
  They lodge but for a day.

THE MOTHER

So quietly I seem to sit apart;
I think she does not know or guess at all,
How dear this certain hour to my old heart,
When in our quiet street the shadows fall.

She leans and listens at the little gate.
I sit so still, not any eye might see
How watchfully before her there I wait
For that one step that brings my world to me.

She does not know that long before they meet
(So eagerly must go a love athirst),
My heart outstrips the flying of her feet,
And meets and greets him first—and greets him first.

WHEN PIERROT PASSES

High above his happy head
Little leaves of Spring were spread;
And adown the dewy lawn
Soft as moss the young green grass
Wooed his footsteps, and the dawn
Paused to watch him pass.
Even so he seemed in truth
Dancing between Love and Youth;
And his song as gay a thing
Still before him seemed to go
Light as any bird awing,
Blithe as jonquils in the Spring,
And we laughed and said, "Pierrot,
'Tis Pierrot."

"Oh," he sang, "Her hands are far
Sweeter than white roses are;
When I hold them to my lips,
Ere I dare a finer bliss,
Petal-like her finger-tips
Tremble 'neath my kiss.
And the mocking of her eyes
Lures me like blue butterflies
Falling—lifting—of their grace,
And her mouth—her mouth is wine."
And we laughed as though her face
Suddenly illumed the place,
And we said, " 'Tis Columbine,
Columbine."

THE POET

He made him a love o' dreams—
  He raised for his heart's delight—
(As the heart of June a crescent moon)
  A frail, fair spirit of light.

He gave her the gift of joy—
  The gift of the dancing feet—
He made her a thing of very Spring—
  Virginal—wild and sweet.

But when he would draw her near
  To his eager heart's content,
As a sunbeam slips from the finger-tips
  She slipped from his hold and went.

Virginal—wild—and sweet—
So she eludes him still—
The love that he made of dawn and shade
Of dominant want and will.

For ever the dream of man
Is more than the dreamer is;
Though he form it whole of his inmost soul,
Yet never 'tis wholly his.

Only is given to him
The right to follow and yearn
The loveliness he may not possess,
The vision that may not turn.

Never to hold or to bind—
Only to know how fleet
The dream that is and yet is not his,—
Virginal—wild—and sweet.

MAGDALEN

My father took me by the hand
And led me home again;
(He brought me in from sorrow
As you'd bring a child from rain).
The child's place at the hearth-stone,
The child's place at the board,
And the picture at the bed's head
Of wee ones wi' the Lord.

It's just a child come home he sees
To nestle at his arm;
(He brought me in from sorrow
As you'd bring a child from harm).

And of the two of us who sit
By hearth and candle-light,
There's just one hears a woman's heart
Break—breaking in the night.

A SALEM MOTHER

I

They whisper at my very gate,
These clacking gossips every one,
"We saw them in the wood of late,
Her and the widow's son;
The horses at the forge may wait,
The wool may go unspun."

I spread the food he loves the best,
I light the lamp when day is done,
Yet still he stays another's guest—
Oh, my one son, my son.
I would it burned in mine own breast
The spell he may not shun.

She hath bewitched him with her eyes.
(No goodly maid hath eyes as bright.)
Pale in the morn I watch him rise,
As one who wanders far by night.
The gossips whisper and surmise—
I hide me from the light.

II

Her hair is yellow as the corn,
Her eyes are bluer than the sky;
Behind the casement yester-morn,
I watched her passing by.
My son not yet had broken bread,
Yet from the table did he rise,
She said no word nor turned her head,
What then the spell that bade him stir,
Nor heeding any word I said,
Put by my hands and follow her.

III

He was so strong and wise and good—
Was there no other she might take,
Nor other mothers' hearts to break?

What though she bade the harvest fail,
What though she willed the cattle die,
So my son's soul was spared thereby.

My cattle fill the pasture-land,
The ripe fruit thickens on the tree,
My son, my son is lost to me.

IV

They burned a witch in our town,
On hangman's hill to-day;
And black the ashes drifted down,
Ashes black and grey,

Not white like those o' martyred folk
Whose souls are clean as they.

They burned a witch in our town,
Upon a windy hill,
For that she made the wells sink down
And wrought a young man ill,
The smoke rose black against the sky,
And hangs before it still.

They burned a witch in our town,
And sure they did but right,
And yet I would the rain could drown
That blackened hill from sight,
And some great wind might drive that cloud
'Twixt God and me this night.

THE DAYS

I CALL my years back, I, grown old,
Recall them day by day;
And some are dressed in cloth o' gold
And some in humble grey.

And those in gold glance scornfully
Or pass me unawares;
But those in grey come close to me
And take my hands in theirs.

THE CALL

I MUST be off where the green boughs beckon—
Why should I linger to barter and reckon?
The mart may pay me—the mart may cheat me,
I have had enough of the huckster's din,
The calm of the deep woods waits to greet me,
(Heart of the high hills, take me in.)

I must be off where the brooks are waking,
Where birds are building and green leaves breaking.
Why should the hold of an old task bind me?
I know of an eyrie I fain would win
Where a wind of the West shall seek me and find me,
(Heart of my high hills, take me in.)

I must be off where the stars are nearer,
Where feet go swifter and eyes see clearer,
Little I heed what the toilers name me—
I have heard the call that to miss were sin,
The April voices that clamour and claim me,
(Heart of my high hills, take me in.)

THE PARASITE

They brought to the little Princess, from her earliest hour of birth,
The lovely things, the beautiful things, the soft things of earth.

They covered her floor with crimson, they wrapped her in eiderdown;
They hung the windows with cloth of gold, lest her eyes look down;
(Lest the highway show an unlovely thing
And her eyes look down.)

They brought rare toys to her cradle, rich gems to her maidenhood;
All that she saw was beautiful, all that she heard was good.

When tumult rose in the city they bade her minstrels sing;
They drowned with the sound of music a people's clamouring;
(Lest she turn and hark to the highway,
And hear an unlovely thing.)

But there came a day of terror, when a cry too sharp and long
Tore through the streets of the city, through the soft, sweet song.

She bade her singers be silent—silent they stood in awe;
She raised the gold from the window; she looked down and saw.
(She leaned and looked on the highway,
She looked down and saw.)

She saw men driven like cattle, she heard the woman's cry,
She saw the white-faced children toil, and the weaklings die.

She saw the bound and the beaten beneath her like shifting sands,
And—she dropped the cloth on her window with her own white hands,
(She shut out her people's crying
With her own white hands.)

As a child may turn from a picture that he may not understand,
She turned to fragrance and music,—to soft things and bland.

If the Princess is blind to anguish, if the Princess is deaf to woe,
If the streets of her city may run with blood, and she not know,

Now theirs is the blame who have closed her in
ease as in folded wings,
Who have barred the doors and windows, what
time her minstrel sings,
Lest her eyes look down on the highway,
And look on unlovely things.

YOUTH

What do they know of youth, who still are
young?
They but the singers of a golden song
Who may not guess its worth or wonder—
flung
Like largesse to the throng.
We only,—young no longer,—old so long
Before its harmonies, stand marvelling—
Oh! we who listen—never they who sing.

Not for itself is beauty, but for us
Who gaze upon it with all reverent eyes;
And youth which sheds its glory luminous,
Gives ever in this wise:—

Itself the joy it may not realise.
Only we know, who linger overlong
Youth that is made of beauty and of song.

THE EMPTY HOUSE

April will come to the quiet town
That I left long ago,
Scattering primroses up and down—
Row upon happy row.
(Oh, little green lane, will she come
your way,
To a certain path I know?)

April will pause by cottage and gate
In the wild, sweet evening rain,
Where the garden borders run brown
and straight,
To coax them to bloom again.
(Oh, little sad garden that once
was gay,
Must she call to you all in vain?)

April will come to cottage and hill,
Laughing her lovers awake.
(Oh, little closed house, so cold and
still,
Will she find you for old joy's sake,
And leave one primrose beside your
door,
Lest the heart of your garden break?)

THE BROKEN LUTE

Good-bye, my song—I, who found words for sorrow,
Offer my joy to-day a useless lute.
In the deep night I sang me of the morrow;
The sun is on my face and I am mute.

Good-bye, my song, in you was all by yearning,
The prayer for this poor heart I wore so long.
Now love heaps roses where the wounds were burning;
What need have I for song?

Long since I sang of all one loves and misses;
How may I sing to-day who know no wrong?
My lips are all for laughter and for kisses.
Good-bye, my song.

ORCHARDS

Orchards in the Spring-time! Oh, I think and
think of them,—
Filmy mists of pink and white above the fresh,
young green,
Lifting and drifting,—how my eyes could drink
of them,
I'm staring at a dirty wall beyond a big machine.

Orchards in the Spring-time! Deep in soft, cool
shadows,—
Moving all together when the west wind blows
Fragrance upon fragrance over road and
meadows—
*I'm smelling heat and oil and sweat, and thick,
black clothes.*

Orchards in the Spring-time! The clean white
and pink of them
Lifting and drifting with all the winds that blow.
Orchards in the Spring-time! Thank God I still
can think of them!
You're not docked for thinking,—if the foreman
doesn't know.

TWILIGHT

Below them in the twilight the quiet village lies,
And warm within its holding, the old folks and the wise,
But here within the open fields the paths of Eden show,
And, hand in hand, across them the little lovers go.

Below them in the village are peaceful folk and still,
They gossip of old yesterdays, of merry times or ill.
But here beyond the twilight stray two who only see
The promise of to-morrow—the dawn that is to be.

Below them in the village the quiet hearth-flames glow,
With friendly word and greeting the neighbours come and go,
But here the silence folds them together, each to each,
And lights within the mating eyes the dream beyond their speech.

Below them in the village stay honest toil and truth,—
They rest there who adventured the road of love and youth.
Smile out, old hearts, when once again two take the path you know,
And, hand in hand, at twilight the little lovers go.

A LOVE SONG

My love it should be silent, being deep—
And being very peaceful should be still—
Still as the utmost depths of ocean keep—
Serenely silent as some mighty hill.

Yet is my love so great it needs must fill
With very joy the inmost heart of me,
The joy of dancing branches on the hill,
The joy of leaping waves upon the sea.

OLD BOATS

I saw the old sea captain in his city daughter's
house,
Shaved till his chin was pink, and brushed till
his hair was flat,
In a broadcloth suit and varnished boots and a
collar up to his ears.
(I'd seen him last with a slicker on and a tied
down oilskin hat.)

And it happened that I went home last June, and
saw in Mallory's yard
The old red dory that sprung a leak a couple of
years ago,

Dragged out of good salt water and braced to
stand in the grass
And be filled with dirt from stem to stern, where
posies and such could grow.

Painted to beat the band, with vines strung over
the sides
And red geraniums in the bow,—a boat that was
built for water
Made into a flower garden. I looked, but I didn't
laugh,
For I thought of the old sea captain living in
town with his daughter.

BEAUTY

Sometimes, slow moving through unlovely days,
The need to look on beauty falls on me
As on the blind the anguished wish to see,
As on the dumb the urge to rage or praise;
Beauty of marble where the eyes may gaze
Till soothed to peace by white serenity,
Or canvas where one master hand sets free
Great colours that like angels blend and blaze.

O, there be many starved in this strange wise—
For this diviner food their days deny,
Knowing beyond their vision beauty stands

With pitying eyes—with tender, outstretched
hands,
Eager to give to every passer-by
The loveliness that feeds a soul's demands.

A SONG

I AM as weary as a child
That weeps upon its mother's breast
For joy of comforting. But I
Have no such place to rest.

I am as weary as a bird
Blown by wild winds far out to sea
When it regains its nest. But, Oh,
There waits no nest for me.

What think you may sustain the bird
That finds no housing after flight?
And what the little child console
Who weeps alone at night?

MOTHERS OF MEN

Mothers of men—the words are good indeed in the saying,
Pride in the very sound of them, strength in the sense of them, then
Why is it their faces haunt me, wistful faces as praying
Ever some dear thing vanished and ever a hope delaying,
Mothers of Men?

Mothers of Men, most patient, tenderly slow to discover
The loss of the old allegiance that may not return again.

You give a man to the world, you give a woman
a lover—
Where is your solace then when the time of giving
is over,
Mothers of Men?

Mothers of Men, but surely, the title is worth the
earning.
You who are brave in feigning must I ever be-
hold you then
By the door of an empty heart with the lamp of
faith still burning,
Watching the ways of life for the sight of a child
returning,
Mothers of Men?

LOVELACE GROWN OLD

I

My life has been like a bee that roves
Through a scented garden close,
And 'tis I who have kept the honey of love,
The hoarded sweetness and scent thereof,
For all I forget the rose.

Oh, exquisite gardens long forgot
That have made my store complete,
Though winter fall upon blossom and bee,
Yet the kisses I garnered remain with me
Forever and ever sweet.

II

The Priest hath had his word and said his say—
A word i' faith more honest than beguiling—
But now he turns upon his gloomy way—
Good soul, he leaves me smiling.

I may not ponder much on future wrath;
Of all those loves of mine, some six or seven,
Surely ere this have climbed that thorny path
That leads at last to Heaven.

My bold, brown beauties, eh, my delicate
And golden damsels with uncensuring eyes,
Not long once did you make your Lovelace wait
Outside of Paradise.

Much am I minded of a certain night—
A night of moon and drifting clouds that hid

The convent wall from overmuch of light
Whereby one watched forbid.

Watched, till he heard within the trembling sound
Of white, girl fingers on the rusting key
That turned her heart as well, till each unbound
Let in felicity.

Ah well, I have small fear—her eyes were blue;
Blue eyes remember though it cost them tears.
Who knows but that same hand shall lead me through
Another Gate of Fears.

In the same fashion, brave, yet most afraid,
Bold for her love yet trembling for her sin—
So, Saints were tricked before. My blue-eyed maid,
Be there to let me in.

III

Since I loved you for a day—Ah, a day, the fleetest—
Since I sighed and rode away when our love was sweetest,
So shall you remember me, now that youth is over,
Fairly, of your courtesy, as your fondest lover.

Since I turned and said good-bye when my heart was truest,
Since we parted, you and I, when our joy was newest,
Love might never turn to doubt and from doubt to scorning.
We but lived his sweetness out twixt a night and morning.

So shall you remember me, eager in pursuing,
Faithful as a man must be in his time o' wooing.
Greater loves but stay and pine so, now youth is over,
Smiling shall you think of mine—mine, your fondest lover.

SHADE

The kindliest thing God ever made,
His hand of very healing laid
Upon a fevered world, is shade.

His glorious company of trees
Throw out their mantles, and on these
The dust-stained wanderer finds ease.

Green temples, closed against the beat
Of noontime's blinding glare and heat,
Open to any pilgrim's feet.

The white road blisters in the sun;
Now, half the weary journey done,
Enter and rest, Oh weary one!

And feel the dew of dawn still wet
Beneath thy feet, and so forget
The burning highway's ache and fret.

This is God's hospitality,
And whoso rests beneath a tree
Hath cause to thank Him gratefully.

THE VAGABOND

The little dream she had forgot
Oh, long and long ago,
Came back across the April fields
And touched her garment so
(As might a wind-blown primrose cling
And one scarce guess or know.)

A little beggared outcast dream
Forgot of Love and men,
And all because a fiddler played
An old song in the glen,
And two Young Lovers hand in hand,
Sent back its tune again.

The little dream she had forgot
  Crept near and clung and stayed—
A roving, ragged vagabond
  Half daring, half afraid,
And all because young love went by
  And one old fiddler played.

DISTANCE

A HUNDRED miles between us
Could never part us more
Than that one step you took from me
What time my need was sore.

A hundred years between us
Might hold us less apart
Than that one dragging moment
Wherein I knew your heart.

Now what farewell is needed
To all I held most dear,
So far and far you are from me
I doubt if you could hear.

THE GYPSYING

I wish we might go gypsying one day the while we're young—
On a blue October morning
Beneath a cloudless sky,
When all the world's a vibrant harp
The winds o' God have strung,
And gay as tossing torches the maples light us by;
The rising sun before us—a golden bubble swung—
I wish we might go gypsying one day the while we're young.

I wish we might go gypsying one day before we're old—
To step it with the wild west wind

And sing the while we go,
Through far forgotten orchards
Hung with jewels red and gold;
Through cool and fragrant forests where never sun may show,
To stand upon a high hill and watch the mist unfold—
I wish we might go gypsying one day before we're old.

I wish we might go gypsying, dear lad, the while we care—
The while we've heart for hazarding,
The while we've will to sing,
The while we've wit to hear the call
And youth and mirth to spare,
Before a day may find us too sad for gypsying,

Before a day may find us too dull to dream and
dare—
I wish we might go gypsying, dear lad, the while
we care.

GOOD-BYE, PIERRETTE

Good-bye, Pierrette. The new moon waits
Like some shy maiden at the gates
  Of rose and pearl, to watch us stand
  This little moment, hand in hand—
Nor one red rose its watch abates.

The low wind through your garden prates
Of one this twilight desolates.
  Ah, was it this your roses planned?
Good-bye, Pierrette.

Oh, merriest of little mates,
No sadder lover hesitates
  Beneath this moon in any land;

Nor any roses, watchful, bland,
Look on a sadder jest of Fate's.
Good-bye, Pierrette.

THE AWAKENING

When the white dawn comes
I shall kneel to welcome it;
The dread that darkened on my eyes
Shall vanish and be gone.
I shall look upon it
As the parched on fountains,
Yet it was the blinding night
That taught the joy of dawn.

When the first bird sings,
Oh, I shall hear rejoicing,
And all my life shall thrill to it
And all my heart draw near.

I shall lean to listen
  Lest a note elude me,
Yet it was the fearsome night
  That taught me how to hear.

When the sun comes up
  I shall lift my arms to it;
The fear of fear shall fall from me
  As shackles from a slave.
I shall run to hail it,
  Free and unbewildered,
Yet it was the silent night
  That taught me to be brave.

THE WEDDING GOWN

She put her wedding-gown away
As tenderly as one might close,
With kissing lips and finger-tips,
The petals of a rose
Still held for the Belovèd's sake—
The loveliest that blows.

She put her wedding-gown away—
The quiet place was all astir
With vague perfume that filled the room,
Cedar and lavender,
Yet sweeter still about it clung
The fragrant thoughts of her.
She put her wedding-gown away—
Yet lingered where its whiteness gleamed

As one above a sleeping Love,
Oh, thus it was she seemed,
Reluctant still to turn and go
And leave him as he dreamed.

THE DISCIPLES

A GREAT king made a feast for Love,
And golden was the board and gold
The hundred, wondrous gauds thereof;
Soft lights like roses fell above
Rare dishes exquisite and fine;
In jeweled goblets shone the wine—
A great king made a feast for Love.

Yet Love as gladly and full-fed hath fared
Upon a broken crust that two have shared;
And from scant wine as glorious dreams drawn up
Seeing two lovers kissed above the cup.

A great king made for Love's delight
A temple wonderful wherein

Served jeweled priest and acolyte;
There fell no darkness day or night
  Since there his highest altar shone
  With flaming gems as some white sun,
A temple made for Love's delight.

Yet Love hath found a temple as complete
In some bare attic where two lovers meet;
  And made his altar by one candle's flame
  Seeing two lovers burned it in his name.

THE UNKNOWING

They do not know the awful tears we shed,
The tender treasures that we keep and kiss;
They could not be so still—our quiet dead
In knowing this.

They do not know what time we turn to fill
Love's empty chalice with a cheaper bliss;
They could not be so still—so very still
In knowing this.

HEART OF A HUNDRED SORROWS

Oh, Heart of a Hundred Sorrows,
Whose pity is great therefore,
The gift that thy children bring thee
Is ever a sorrow more.

Sure of thy dear compassion,
Concerned for our own relief,
Ever and ever we seek thee,
And each with his gift of grief.

Oh, not to reprove my brothers,
Yet I, who am less than less,
Would bring thee my joy of being
The rose of my happiness.

The spirit that makes my singing
The gladness without alloy,
Oh, Heart of a Hundred Sorrows,
I bring thee a little joy.

THE RETURNING

I said I will go back again where we
Were glad together. But my dear, my dear,
Where are the roses we were wont to see
The songs we used to hear?

I said the hearth-flame that once burned for us
I will renew with all the cheer of old,
Yet here within the circle luminous
Our very hearts are cold.

That was a barren garden that we found,
This was an empty house we came to meet,
We, who for all our longing, hear no sound
Of Love's returning feet.

THE INLANDER

I NEVER climb a high hill
Or gaze across the lea,
But, Oh, beyond the two of them,
Beyond the height and blue of them,
I'm looking for the sea.

A blue sea—a crooning sea—
A grey sea lashed with foam—
But, Oh, to take the drift of it,
To know the surge and lift of it,
And 'tis I am longing for it as the homeless
long for home.

I never dream at night-time
Or close my eyes by day,

But there I have the might of it,
The wind-whipped, sun-drenched sight of it,
That calls my soul away.

Oh, deep dreams and happy dreams,
Its dreaming still I'd be,
For still the land I'm waking in,
'Tis that my heart is breaking in,
And 'tis far where I'd be sleeping with the
blue waves over me.

AD FINEM

I LIKE to think this friendship that we hold
As youth's high gift in our two hands to-day
Still shall we find as bright, untarnished gold
What time the fleeting years have left us grey.
I like to think we two shall watch the May
Dance down her happy hills and Autumn fold
The world in flame and beauty, we grown old
Staunch comrades on an undivided way.

I like to think of Winter nights made bright
By book and hearth-flame when we two shall smile
At memories of to-day—we two content

To count our vanished dawns by candle-light
Seeing we hold in our old hands the while
The gift of gold youth left us as she went.

A SONG OF HELOISE

God send thee peace, Oh, great unhappy heart—
A world away, I pray that thou mayst rest
Softly as on the Well-Belovèd's breast,
Where ever in her wistful dreams thou art.

At dawn my prayer is all for thee, at noon
My very heart and, Oh, at night my tears
For all we walk alone the empty years
Nor meet neath any sun—neath any moon.

Yet must my love go with thee—all apart
From this the life I lend to lesser things;
God send to thee this night beneath its wings,
A little peace, Oh, great unhappy heart.

THE RETURN

I COME to you grown weary of much laughter,
From jangling mirth that once seemed over-
sweet,
From all the mocking ghosts that follow after
A man's returning feet;
Give me no word of welcome or of greeting
Only in silence let me enter in,
Only in silence when our eyes are meeting,
Absolve me of my sin.

I come to you grown weary of much living,
Open your door and lift me of your grace,
I ask for no compassion, no forgiving,
Only your face, your face;

Only in that white peace that is your dwelling
To come again, before your feet to sink,
And of your quiet as of wine compelling
Drink as the thirsting drink.

Be kind to me as sleep is kind that closes
With tender hands men's fever-wearied eyes,
Your arms are as a garden of white roses
Where old remembrance lies,
I, who am bruised with words and pierced with chiding,
Give me your silence as a Saint might give
Her white cloak for some hunted creature's hiding,
That he might rest and live.

THE POPLARS

My poplars are like ladies trim,
Each conscious of her own estate;
In costume somewhat over prim,
In manner cordially sedate,
Like two old neighbours met to chat
Beside my garden gate.

My stately old aristocrats—
I fancy still their talk must be
Of rose-conserves and Persian cats,
And lavender and Indian tea;—
I wonder sometimes as I pass
If they approve of me.

I give them greeting night and morn,
I like to think they answer, too,
With that benign assurance born
When youth gives age the reverence due,
And bend their wise heads as I go
As courteous ladies do.

Long may you stand before my door,
Oh, kindly neighbours garbed in green,
And bend with rustling welcome o'er
The many friends who pass between;
And where the little children play
Look down with gracious mien.

THE LITTLE JOYS

My little joys went by me
As little children run
Across the fields at sunset
When playing time is done.

And now alone at twilight
What is there may content
The heart that loved their laughter
And frolic merriment?

Ah well, who knows but still may dawn
Another fairer day
Wherein my little joys may come
A-dancing out to play.

SONGS OF HIMSELF

HIMSELF

The houseful that we were then, you could count
us by the dozens,
The wonder was that sometimes the old walls
wouldn't burst:
Herself (the Lord be good to her!), the aunts and
rafts of cousins,
The young folks and the children,—but Himself
came first.

Master of the House he was, and well for them
that knew it:
His cheeks like winter apples and his head like
snow;
Eyes as blue as water when the sun of March
shines through it.
And steppin' like a soldier with his stick held so.

Faith, but he could tell a tale would serve a man
for wages,
Sing a song would put the joy of dancin' in two
sticks;
But Saints between themselves and harm that saw
him in his rages,
Blazin' and oratin' over chess and politics.

Master of the House he was, and that beyond all
sayin',
Eh, the times I've heard him exhortin' from his
chair
The like of any Bishop, yet snappin' off his prayin'
To put the curse on Phelan's dog for howlin' in
the prayer.

The times I've seen him walkin' out like Solomon
in glory,
Salutin' with great elegance the gentry he might
meet;

An eye for every pretty girl, an ear for every
story,
And takin' as his just deserts the middle of the
street.

Master of the House, with much to love and be
forgiven,—
Yet, thinkin' of Himself to-day—Himself—I see
him go
With that old light step of his, across the Courts
of Heaven,
His hat a little sideways and his stick held so.

THE FAIR

The pick o' seven counties, so they're tellin' me,
was there,
Horses racin' on the track, and fiddles on the green,
Flyin' flags and blowin' horns and all that makes a
fair,
I'm hearin' that the like of it was something never
seen.

So it is they're tellin' me,
Girl dear, it may be true—
I only know the bonnet strings
Beneath your chin were blue.

I'm hearin' that the cattle came that thick they
stood in rows,

And Doolan's Timmy caught the pig and Terry climbed the pole,
They're tellin' me they showed the cream of everything that grows,
And never man had eyes enough for takin' in the whole.

So it is they're tellin' me,
Girl dear, it may be so,
I only know your little gown
Was whiter than the snow.

They're tellin' me the gentry came from twenty miles about,
And him that came from Ballinsloe sang limpin' Jamesey down,
And 'twas Himself, no less, stood by to give the prizes out,
They're tellin' me you'd hear the noise from here to Dublin town.

So it is they're tellin' me,
Girl dear, the same may be,
I only know that comin' home
You gave your word to me.

HIS DANCING DAYS

NEVER did I find me mate for charmin' an' delightin',
Never one that had me bate for courtin' an' for fightin';—
(A white moon at the crossroads then, and Denny with the fiddle;
The parish round admirin', when I danced down the middle.)
Up the earth and down again, me like you'd not discover;
Arrah! for the times before me dancin' days were over!

Never was a moon so low it didn't find me courtin',

Never blade I couldn't show a wilder way of
sportin'.
(Is it at the fair I'd be, the gentry'd troop to talk
with me;
Leapin' with delight was she,—the girl I'd choose
to walk with me.)
'Twas I could win the pick of them from any lad
or lover;
Arrah! for the times before me dancin' days were
over!

What's come to all the lads to-day,—these mourn-
ful ways they're keepin',
Grudgin' any hour to play and wastin' nights in
sleepin'.
(Readin' be the chimney-place,—that dacent in
their habits,
You'd sooner get a fight or song be callin' upon
rabbits.)

Faith, I'd change the lot for one rejoicin', rantin' rover,

The like of me, myself, before me dancin' days were over.

SHEILA

Katie had the grand eyes and Delia had a way
with her,
And Mary had the Saints' face and Maggie's waist
was neat,
But Sheila had the merry heart that travelled all
the day with her,
That put the laughing on her lips and dancing in
her feet.

I've met with martyrs in my time, and Faith! they
make the best of it,
But 'tis the uncomplaining ones that wear a sor-
row long,

'Twas Sheila had the better way and that's to make
a jest of it,
To call her trouble out to dance and step it with a
song.

Eh, but Sheila had the laugh the like of drink to
weary ones,
(I've never heard the beat of it for all I've wan-
dered wide.)
And out of all the girls I knew the tender ones—
the dreary ones,—
'Twas only Sheila of the laugh that broke her
heart and died.

THE GRIEF

The heart of me's an empty thing, that never stirs at all
For Moon-shine or Spring-time, or a far bird's call.
I only know 'tis living by a grief that shakes it so,—
Like an East wind in Autumn, when the old nests blow.

Grey Eyes and Black Hair, 'tis never you I blame.
'Tis long years and easy years since last I spoke your name.

And I'm long past the knife-thrust I got at wake
or fair.
Or looking past the lighted door and fancying you
there.

Grey Eyes and Black Hair—the grief is never
this;
I've long forgot the soft arms—the first, wild kiss.
But, Oh, girl that tore my youth,—'tis this I have
to bear,—
If you were kneeling at my feet I'd neither stay
nor care.

THE INTRODUCTION

I'm askin' you'll be easy for a bit, Sir,
The lad's had little but a thrush's schoolin',
The blue skies and the fields, the little whipster,
'Tis time enough for something more—(But whisper)
He'll go the better for an easy rulin'.

Herself was always for the bit of readin'
But Denny here, he's great for growin' things,
There's not a primrose that he'd not be heedin'
Herself is right 'tis graver things he's needin'
The thrush is tamer when you clip his wings.
I'd never have you spare him with the learnin',

(And, Faith, 'tis little that the lad has had),
But if above his task you'll see him turnin'
To watch the fields—'tis just the thrush's yearnin'—
I'm askin' you'll be easy with the lad.

THE STAY-AT-HOME

Comin' or goin' still they spread the news,
About America how grand it is,
The wonders that are waitin' you to choose
And gold that common that like sand it is.
"And here you stick," says they. "Like some old tree
Stuck in the bog belaboured by all seasons.
What's ailin' ye?" says they. Well, leave them be,
I have me reasons.

There's Cormac's Hugh come back with all his talk,
Spreadin' and spendin' like a king he is.

The people flockin' down the way he'll walk,
Till in the middle of a ring he is.
But where's that one whose face was like a rose
The day he went, betwixt her tears and teasin's?
Married these five years—gone where no man knows,
Faith, I've me reasons.

"A likely lad," they say. "What's ailin' you,
The gold and riches over there it is."
Sure, I'm not doubtin' what they say is true
They have me leave to hurry where it is.
'Tis I will hold the treasure that endures,
The while I'm listenin' to their talks and treasons.
Oh, Sheila girl, those two blue eyes of yours,
Faith, I've me reasons.